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ABSTRACT

Some facts about the homeless population in Florida are the following: (1) 40,000 persons in Florida are homeless on any given day, with 40 percent of the total being families; (2) 65 percent are new homeless (not chronic); (3) 30 percent of the homeless are addicted to drugs or alcohol and 20 percent are mentally ill; (4) causes of homelessness include a lack of affordable housing, unemployment and low wages, substance abuse and mental illness, family disintegration, migration, and illiteracy; and (5) single women heads of households are particularly vulnerable to homelessness. Attempts to alleviate the problem of homelessness in Florida include implementation of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act's Adult Education for the Homeless (AEH) program, which provides a basis for local programs that include outreach, cooperation with employment and training and other social service agencies, individualized instruction, written goals, a reasonable budget, and an evaluation plan. More than $500,000 has been provided to Florida in AEH funds for 1993-94 year. The AEH program includes the following components: collaboration with rehabilitation and treatment programs; self-esteem, social interaction, and coping skills training, General Educational Development (GED) test instruction; referrals to meet survival needs; adult basic education, with emphasis on functional skills; and linkage to jobs, and vocational and other training. During the 1992-93 program year, approximately 3,200 homeless people in Florida received instructional services through the AEH program through seven local agencies at numerous sites. Approximately half the participants were Black, one-third were White, 12 percent were Hispanic, and 1 percent were other ethnic groups. The largest number of participants were aged 25-44, followed by the 16-24 age group and the 45-59 age group. The following results were found: 1,358 students improved their basic skills; 2,207 learned reading, writing, and mathematics; 60 obtained a high school diploma or passed the GED test; 115 completed beginning classes in English as a Second Language; and 169 obtained a job. (KC)

ED 366 849

# FLORIDA'S ADULT HOMELESS LITERACY TRAINING & BASIC SKILLS ASSISTANCE PROJECT

FUNDED UNDER THE U.S. STEWART B. MCKINNEY HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT
ADULT EDUCATION FOR THE HOMELESS PROGRAM

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# Florida's Adult Homeless Literacy Training & Basic Skills Assistance Project

# The Demographics of Florida's Homeless: 1993 Florida Department of Health & Rehabilitative Services Data

**40,000 homeless persons exist in Florida on any given day.**

- Families represent 40% of the homeless.
- Single males are 50% of the total.
- Single females are the remaining 10%.

***Other characteristics:***

- 65% are new homeless (not chronic).
- 75% are state residents.
- 22% are veterans.

***Disabilities of the homeless:***

- 30% are addicted to drugs or alcohol.
- 20% are mentally ill.
- 8% have HIV/AIDS.

**Homelessness in Florida is increasing 15% per year. Local agencies serving the homeless reported a 20% annual increase in the number of homeless seeking assistance.**

# Causes of Homelessness

- Lack of decent, affordable housing
  - **84%** of very low income renters spend **60%** or more of their gross income on housing costs
- Unemployment, low wages, and lack of job skills
  - A person working a full-time minimum wage job earns a wage **79%** (or **$2300** per year) below the federal poverty level for a household of 3
- Poverty
- Substance abuse and mental illness
  - The shortage of prevention and treatment resources
  - More than half of the severely mental ill abuse alcohol or other substances
- Family disintegration, including divorce, desertion, teen pregnancy, domestic violence and runaway youth
  - In 1992, more than **64,000** unwed mothers gave birth in Florida
- Migration and immigration of persons to Florida without means of self-support
  - An estimated **25%** of all Florida homeless are from other states or countries
- 10% of Florida adults are functionally illiterate (8th grade or less)
  - 26% of Florida adults do not have a high school diploma or GED
- AIDS/HIV
- Jail or prison release
  - More offenders are being released without housing, jobs or viable means of self-support
- Lack of public transportation, especially in rural areas
- Lack of affordable child care and health care
- Free will

# Vulnerability of Single Parents

***Women who are single parents are particularly vulnerable to homelessness as indicated by:***

- Difficulty in collecting child support payments
  - In 1990, 81.4% of all Florida child support obligations were not paid in full
- In Florida, the maximum combined Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and food stamp benefits provide an income equivalent to 62% of the federal poverty level for a household of three
- The affordable housing crisis
  - 87% of female-headed households in Florida are unable to purchase a median-priced home ($60,000)
  - Young parents under age 18 cannot legally obtain federally subsidized housing
- Waiting lists for child care hinders the ability to work
  - On December 31, 1992, subsidized child care was needed, but unavailable, for more than 59,000 Florida children aged one through four

# The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act Adult Education for the Homeless (AEH) Program

**The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 funds a wide range of programs intended to respond to America's growing homeless problem. Section 702 of this Act provides funding for Florida's Adult Education for the Homeless (AEH) program.**

**McKinney Homeless Definition:**
A homeless person is an individual lacking a fixed regular, and adequate night-time residence or having a primary night-time residence that is (1) a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations to include, but not be limited to, welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for mentally ill; (2) an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or (3) a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. Individuals imprisoned or otherwise detained pursuant to an Act of the Congress or a State law are not by definition included.

**AEH Program Rules:**
**Available at volume 54, Part 441, Code of Federal Regulations**

***Purpose of AEH Grants:***

- To assist state educational agencies in implementing a program of literacy training and basic skills remediation for homeless adults within the state

# The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act Adult Education for the Homeless (AEH) Program

***Definition of Adults:***

- 16 or older

***Requirements for Local AEH Programs:***

- Outreach activities
- Cooperative relationships with employment and training and other social service agencies to provide an integrated package of support services, so that homeless adults will be ready for and responsive to instructional services
- Individualized, instructional services readily accessible to students, by such strategies as locating services at shelter or transitional housing sites
- Written, measurable goals and objectives
- A reasonable budget adequate to meet program objectives
- An evaluation plan which measures program and participant success and provides frequent feedback from participants, teachers and community groups

## Eligible Expenses

***Examples of fundable expenses related to the participation of homeless adults in literacy-related activities:***

- Outreach, including recruiting, materials or other promotional activities
- Support services to facilitate participation in program instruction, including child care, transportation, etc.
- Instructional support, including teachers, materials, equipment, curriculum and staff development, GED test fees
- Program coordination, clerical or other project-related staff support
- Office supplies and equipment
- Staff travel and expenses
- Evaluation activities

## Florida's AEH Funding History

***Florida has received federal AEH funds for the following program years:***

1988-89 -- $263,497
1989-90 -- $278,126
1992-93 -- $500,000
1993-94 -- $506,239

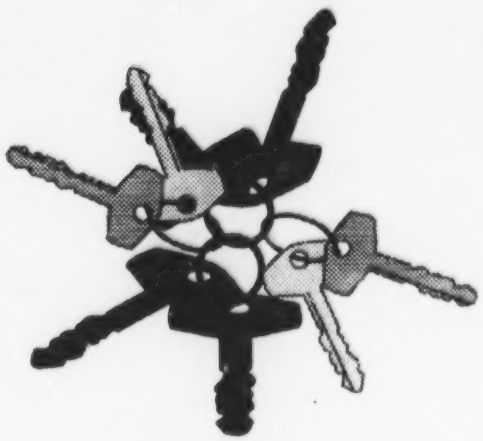
- Program Year 1993-94 is the first year of a three year contract awarded to Florida by the U.S. Department of Education.

# AEH "Keys to Success"

**Collaboration with Rehabilitation & Treatment Programs**

**Linkage to Jobs, Vocational & Other Job Training**

**Self-Esteem, Social Interaction & Coping Skills**



**ABE*, with a functional skills emphasis- budgeting, parenting, etc.**

**GED****

**Referrals to meet survival needs- case-management food, clothing, shelter, etc.**

*Adult Basic Education - instruction through grade 8.9
**General Education Development

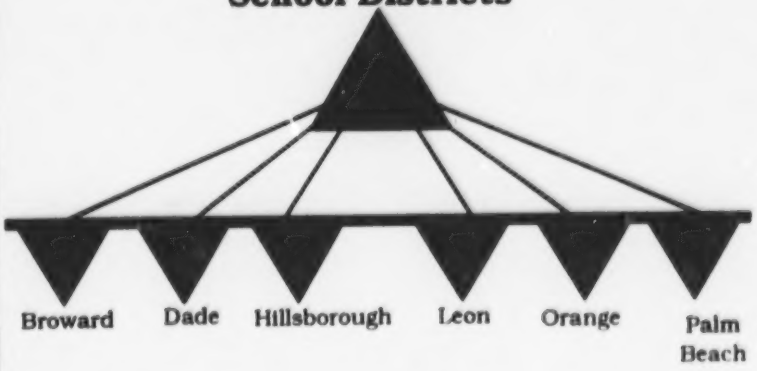
---

# State Fee-Exempt Law

Florida's legislature has passed legislation exempting homeless adults from paying registration, matriculation and laboratory fees for a wide range of educational offerings, including vocational training.

# Florida's Funded Projects May 1, 1993 - April 30, 1994

## School Districts




## Community Colleges

## Distribution of Funds

| | |
|---|---|
| Total federal funds: | **$506,239** |
| Amount distributed to projects: | **$418,195** |

# Florida's AEH Program Implementation for Program Year 1992-93

## Local AEH Programs Make a Difference - Student Stories

Lonnie had experienced a troubled life. Beginning at an early age, she suffered from physical abuse at the hand of her stepfather. At age six, she started drinking, with alcohol controlling her life for countless years. She quit school at age 16 and turned to prostitution. There was a period of sobriety when she attended community college and earned a degree as a social work paraprofessional. Lonnie subsequently obtained work in a residential treatment program for sex offenders. When a resident murdered a coworker, Lonnie tried to commit suicide. She later held a number of different jobs, including running several small businesses.

At age 50, Lonnie was released from a halfway house for alcoholics, and she landed on the doorstep of Orlando's AEH Program. She watched the class for some time, then Lonnie told a program instructor that she was feeling suicidal. She received the empathy she needed to know that somebody cared about her. After the instructor gave her a composition book, Lonnie began to write poetry, revealing the saga of her life. Later, the "Homeless Poetess" received recognition due to an extensive newspaper article. She became a local celebrity, and her readings were in great demand in local churches and schools. The program received thousands of dollars in local support from individuals who wanted to help the homeless, many of whom better understood the homeless after reading Lonnie's writing. These funds were used to purchase eyeglasses and other items needed by homeless adults to attend classes.

Lonnie left the Orlando AEH Program for a halfway house for recovering alcoholics and found work, but she retained contact with her instructor. She learned that she had cancer, and her former teacher was there for support in the days before Lonnie died. Lonnie has inspired other homeless students who attend the adult education class she once attended.

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Lori, a homeless parent of a two year old in Ft. Lauderdale, was able to attend local AEH classes after child care was made available to her. The AEH program assisted her in finding a job. She realized her goal of passing the GED before she left the program.

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Mike, age 60, had been homeless for three years before he entered a Jacksonville homeless program. Seven months after enrolling in AEH classes at this facility, he obtained his GED. Eight months later, he earned a certified nursing assistant certificate, graduating at the top of his class.

# Overview of Local AEH Sites for Project Year 1992-93

**Broward Backpack** provided AEH classes at a number of different facilities serving the homeless, including shelters, a drug treatment program for women, a runaway shelter, and a daytime drop-in program for the homeless. As a result of regular visits by a vocational specialist at one site, a number of students enrolled in local vocational programs. At two Salvation Army sites in Broward County, an adult educator helped parents improve their parenting skills. Broward Backpack developed a curriculum guide emphasizing life skills.

**Dade Project Restart** had classes at over 20 sites before Hurricane Andrew struck. After the hurricane created large numbers of new homeless in South Dade County, the local project used grant funds to hire a recruiter to encourage the newly displaced to enroll in adult education. Restart continued to use VISTA volunteers for recruitment. The project used grant funds to make purchases of computers and other equipment.

**Florida Community College at Jacksonville's Literacy Training for the Homeless Project** developed a curriculum guide for instructors, with an emphasis on life skills, community resources, and creative and expressive arts. Grant funds were expended for child care at one site to enable residents to enroll in AEH classes. Classes were begun at six new sites, including a meal program located at a church.

**Hillsborough Homeward Bound** developed a street survival guide to advise the homeless of community resources and encourage attendance in adult education classes. Grant funds were used to hire a recruiter and to purchase a diverse array of educational materials, including computer software, educational games, and printed materials.

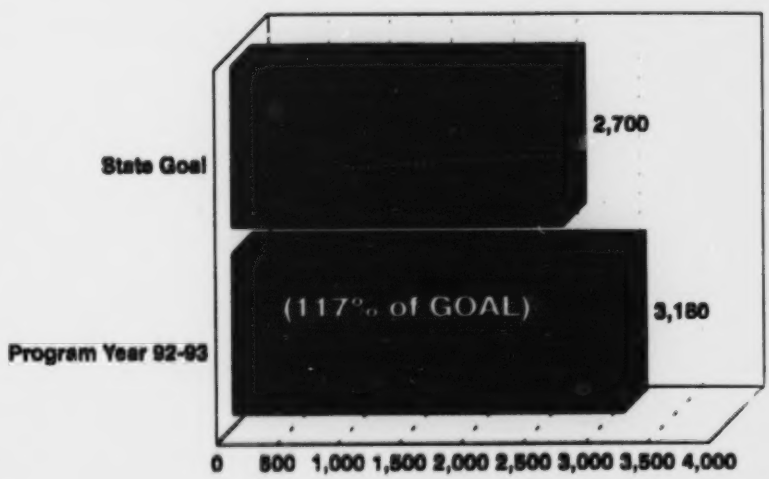
**Orange Functional Skills for the Homeless** was targeted to the chronically homeless. Student self-esteem was enhanced by a student-produced handout used to recruit other homeless adults into the AEH program. The project utilized student literacy corps tutors under a federal grant to the University of Central Florida to provide more individualized instruction to AEH students.

**Palm Beach County Homeless Project** started classes at five sites in the first year of operation. There was a strong emphasis on self-esteem, with the utilization of a project-developed module on self-esteem. Students regularly attending class received duffel or tote bags filled with personal care items donated by businesses.

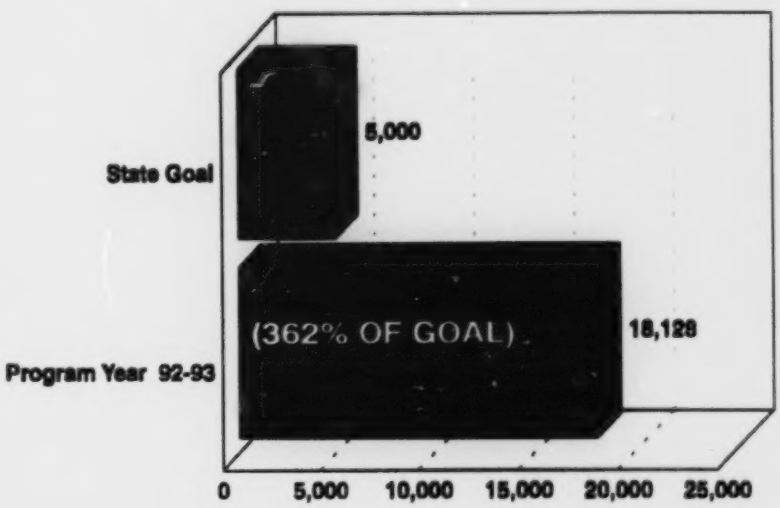
**Religious Community Services' Project Jump Start** provided a core of life skills instruction in such areas as health and nutrition, parenting, and interpersonal relationships and other ABE and GED instruction to the single parents residing at their Stepping Stones facility. Grant funds were utilized to develop a life skills curriculum guide.

# Data From Most Recent Florida AEH Annual Report for Program Year 1992-93 (May 1, 1992 - April 30, 1993)

## Number of Homeless Adults In Florida Receiving Instructional Services

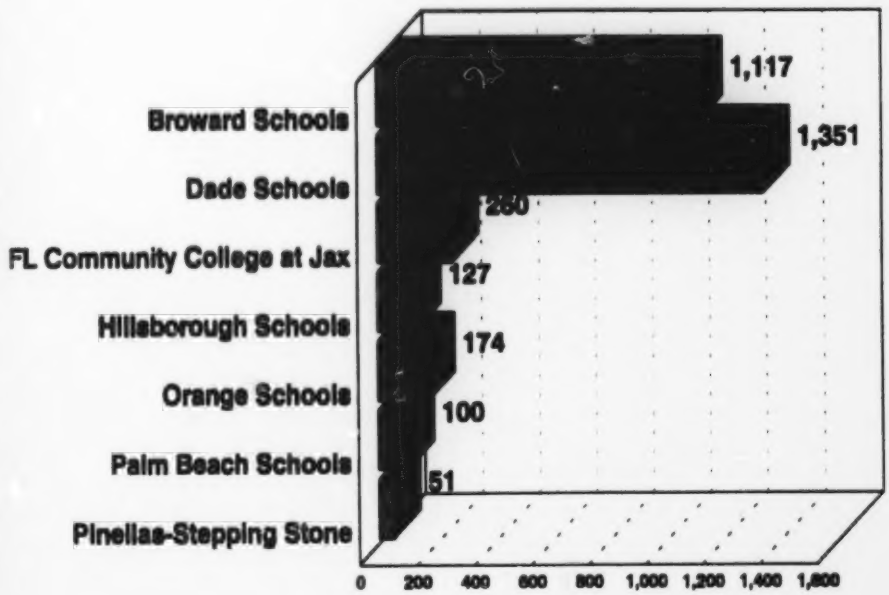



## Number of Social Services Referrals in Florida by Project Staff



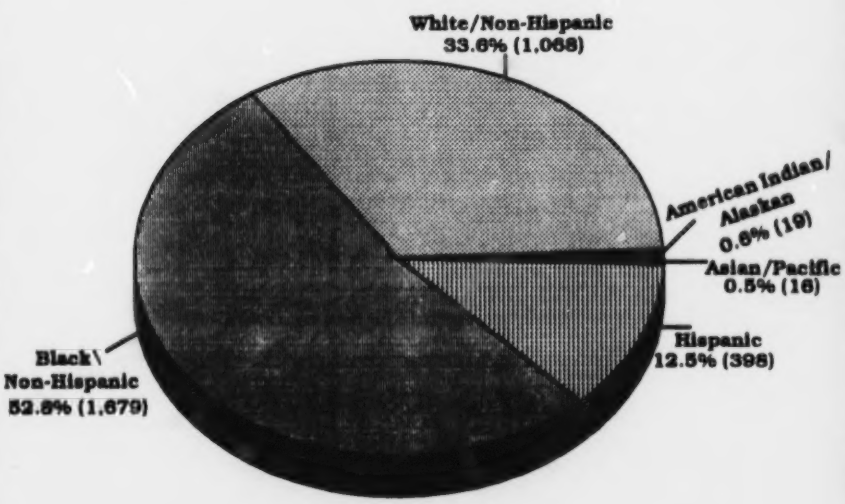
# Data From Most Recent Florida AEH Annual Report for Program Year 1992-93 (May 1, 1992 - April 30, 1993)

## Number of Florida AEH Participants by Site

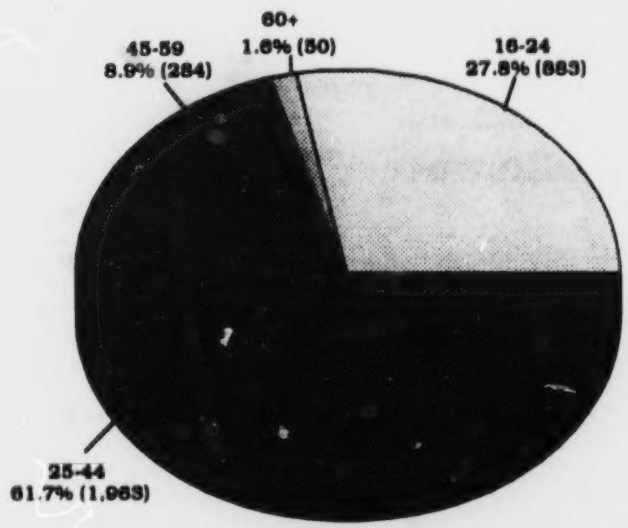


# Social Characteristics at Enrollment of Florida AEH Students for Program Year 1992-93

## Race/Ethnic Group

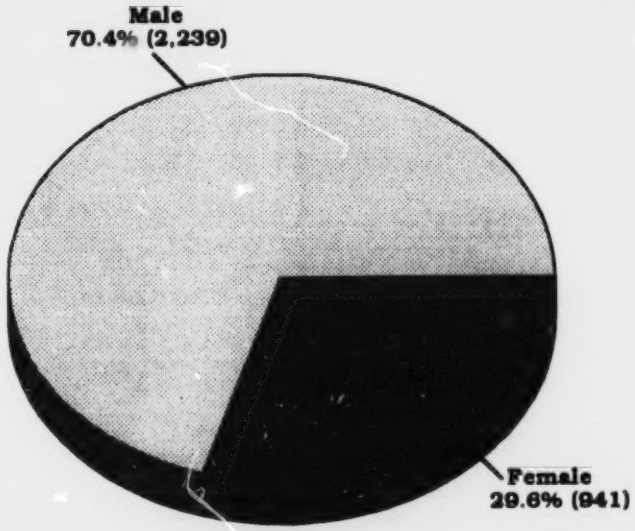



## Age Group

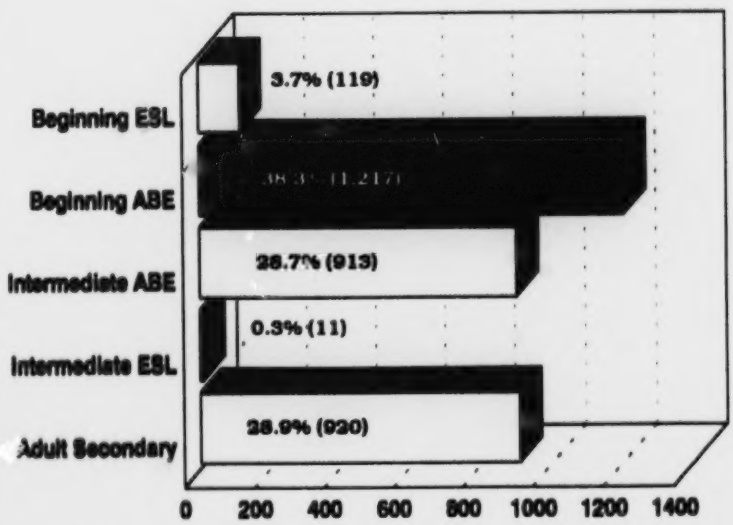


# Characteristics of Florida AEH Students at Enrollment for Program Year 1992-93

## Gender

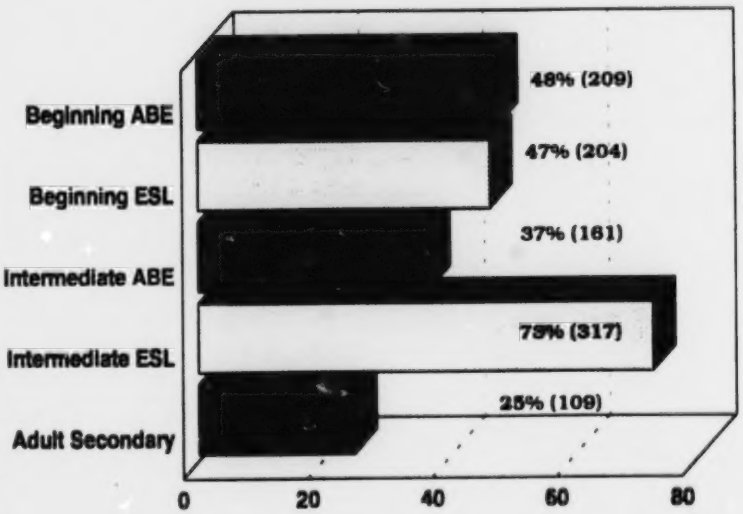



## Instructional Program at Enrollment



# Florida AEH Student Achievements for Program Year 1992-93

## Percent Completing Instructional Programs Based On Level at Enrollment




## Range of Florida AEH Student Achievements

| Accomplishment | Number of Students |
|---|---|
| Improved Basic Skills | 1358 |
| Learned Reading, Writing, Math | 2207 |
| Obtained Adult High School Diploma | 4 |
| Passed GED | 56 |
| Completed Beginning ESL | 115 |
| Completed Intermediate ESL | 10 |
| Entered Education or Training | 371 |
| Obtained a Job | 169 |
| Obtained Better Job/Salary | 23 |
| Removed from Public Assistance | 6 |
| Received U.S. Citizenship | 18 |
| Registered to Vote | 154 |
| Other | 21 |

# Information, Technical Assistance & Data

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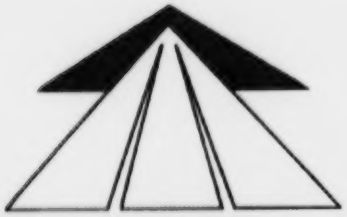

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